

841

224

[227]

[784]

[262]

262

224

● [886]

[841]

[562]

[226]

224

535

[789]

[178]

[796]

[P-382, A]

"I'm giving you a bath to wash away the bad luck." (2334-2378).

A further restriction placed on menstruating women was that they must not eat meat during their periods. To do so meant bad hunting for the man who killed the game.

The meat from the neck of a deer and the intestinal organs were forbidden to vigorous young people. If a man ate neck meat his aim would be bad (360-368). Neck meat was reserved for children and the old. In actuality it would seem that only the children and the almost decrepit ate such meat. One of my informants who is seventy-five, thus certainly qualifying for old age, has never tasted either neck meat or internal organs. To do so apparently would be an admission of loss of vigour which no Washo oldster wishes to make. Menstruating women today will eat meat purchased from a butcher but refrain from eating venison or other game taken by someone they know, for fear of spoiling his luck. Menstrual taboos also hold today in regard to touching firearms or fishing poles, although at least some Washo women own fishing poles, and in the early part of this century a woman who lives at Carson City was reputed to be a great hunter. In times past, certain women are reported to have made excellent bows but not to have used them.

Stewart reports dances to bring deer which none of my informants remembered. However, even in his time the dances were said to be "mainly for pleasure," which suggests the sacred nature of such dances has gradually faded out of the consciousness of most modern Washo, particularly as deer hunting has become entirely an individual enterprise and is no longer central to Washo subsistence.

GATHERING

222

527

[789]

[535]

As stated earlier, there appears to have been much less ritual involved in gathering activities, perhaps because there was much less chance of failure than in hunting. However, Stewart reports that sometimes dances were held to make seeds grow (2619-2621). Such gatherings appear to be remembered, if at all, by living Washo only as social occasions.

[262]

[178]

The fall pine-nut dance was clearly part of the ritual of the pine-nut harvest (2617, 2622). The pine nut was central to Washo winter survival, and its production was a matter of extreme concern. Even today the pine-nut harvest becomes a paramount interest among all the Washo during the last part of the summer. Speculations as to its size, wishes for rain, and survey trips into the pine-nut hills become common, and according to one informant: "If we have a couple of bad years somebody will say, 'We ought to have a pine-nut dance,' and then we'll have one."

222

527

[115]

The following account of the pine-nut dances of the past was given to me by a man, now almost blind, of between seventy-five and eighty. His father claimed to be chief of the Washo through an affinal relationship to the famous Captain Jim, and my informant maintains the claim, stoutly denied by all other Washo except his relatives and admitted by them only when they are forced to depend on his hospitality. The account is one of a well-regulated four-day ceremony of the first fruit. However, it will become apparent as other information is presented that it is a highly idealized version. It is valuable, however, because it includes a number of sacred elements of obvious importance.